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ABSTRACT

A conference of 15 experts in English as a second language (ESL) from Indochinese programs across the country arrived at a consensus regarding the characteristics of an effective ESL program. Prior to ESL instruction, student needs must be addressed, including basic living needs, orientation in the native language, and seeking the collaboration of various agencies. Refugees must be viewed as having special requirements. Program design will take into consideration such aspects of refugee background as ethnic origin, education, literacy, English proficiency, and individual goals. The setting for the program may be non-formal, a single multi-level class, a center, or an on-job site. The ESL instructional focus may be on survival training, literacy, basic skills, vocational instruction, or English for specific occupational purposes. Each of these focuses is defined; clients to be served, method of delivery, intensity of instruction, program content, desirable outcome, and special considerations are all specified. All information is presented in outline form. (JB)

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needs assessment

native language orientation

resource use

technical assistance

service delivery

instructional focus

competency-based instruction

vocational education

home management skills

program evaluation

program goals

subsistence needs

refugee input to program design

teacher training

cultural awareness

literacy

classroom setting

ESL frameworks

non-formal education

survival ESL

definitions of terms

communication of resources

Refugee Education Guide
Adult Education Series #11

ED207349

Program Design Considerations for English as a Second Language

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Foreword

In February, 1980, fifteen ESL experts from Indochinese programs across the country were brought together in Washington, D.C., by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services, for a three-day working conference. (See the list of participants on the next page.) They were given the task of defining and describing the minimal practical components of models of ESL programs for Indochinese refugees. They were further instructed to translate these program models into language which could be easily understood by persons without any ESL or theoretical/academic background.

A wide range of programs, geographical areas, and resettlement situations was represented by the participants. It is probably fair to say that all participants had some expectation that, because of the many differences in programs, approaches and philosophies, the assigned task would be an extremely difficult, if not impossible one. Imagine the amazement and satisfaction when, after the first day, it was found that everyone was essentially in agreement about the needs of the refugee client group, the operational design of a good ESL program, and the goals an ESL program can have. In the ensuing two days, the conference participants intensively examined the content and strategies required to meet the needs and goals.

This document is the product of the working conference. It is an outgrowth of the collective experience of refugee ESL programs nationwide. At the time it was written in February 1980, the term "refugee" referred largely to persons from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. With the advent of the Refugee Act of 1980, "refugee" came to be used to encompass many other groups of people as well. Although references in the Guide are made specifically to refugees from these Southeast Asian countries, the principles and recommendations given are applicable to ESL programs for any refugee group.

To be as functional as possible in providing program guidelines, this document was written in outline form. It first defines the minimum components any ESL program must have to succeed, and then presents alternative frameworks for programs or program components specifically designed to meet refugee client needs. If after reading this Guide, you feel that you would like or need further information or assistance, you can contact the Language and Orientation Resource Center on the toll-free number listed on the cover.

The participants and their affiliations at the time of the conference were:

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PROGRAM DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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PROGRAM DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

INTRODUCTION

Most of the refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos require some form of English language instruction to acquire the ability to communicate effectively enough in English to achieve self-reliance. This document outlines the minimum practical elements of English language (ESL) programs and/or program components necessary to successfully meet the needs of refugee clients.

A. DEFINITION OF ESL

- ESL is the commonly-used acronym for English as a Second Language.
- ESL programs teach English to people who speak other languages; in essence, they teach people how to use the words and sentence patterns of English to communicate effectively.
- ESL programs differ in fundamental respects from programs designed for native speakers of English, such as literacy, reading improvement or speech therapy.

B. ESSENTIALS FOR ESL TO SUCCEED

Before ESL is begun, certain other needs must be addressed:

1. Client concerns

- Housing: the client must have a place to live.
- Basic subsistence: the client must have a way of obtaining essentials for living.
- Health: the client must receive treatment for any health problems.
- Transportation: the client must have a way to get to the ESL class.
- Day care: female clients with children may need day care services to enable them to attend ESL classes.

2. Native language orientation

To begin to settle and function in the community, the client will need to be provided information in his native language in areas such as:

- Rights and responsibilities

- Food and nutrition
- American customs and manners
- Religions and ethnic groups and practices in the U.S.
- Parenting
- Education for children

3. Coordinated Effort

Refugee resettlement is a collaborative and cooperative effort. An ESL program should be aware of, use and coordinate with other available resources, such as:

- Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGS) or their local affiliates
- Local sponsoring agencies
- Local sponsor (e.g. church, relatives, etc.)
- Social services
- Existing community groups and services (e.g. local church, mutual assistance, etc.)
- Programs offered by other groups (e.g. local university/ community college, community groups, etc.)
- Vocational training
- Referral Networks

C. USE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Any available technical assistance to ESL programs should be taken advantage of. There will most probably be both federally and regionally funded technical assistance available.

D. SPECIAL RAMIFICATIONS OF REFUGEE ESL

- There are many areas where ESL programs do not exist but where refugees need ESL.
- Even in areas where there are ESL programs, the refugees present a challenge because the American education system has never dealt with large numbers of students from the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the Indochinese refugees.

- There is a need for refugee input so that programs will meet the felt needs of the refugee populations as well as the felt needs of the social service agencies.
- Those working with refugees need to understand the particular problems and special needs of the refugees and be sensitive to them.
- Teachers should have an awareness of the educational needs of the refugees as opposed to those of other groups.

I. MINIMUM ESL PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

In considering program design, the following components are minimum:

A. INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT

The ESL needs of the clients should be determined by considering the clients'

1. Ethnic background: Many different groups are found in each of the three countries from which the refugees come, such as:

   Vietnam: Vietnamese, Ethnic Chinese, etc.
   Cambodia: Cambodians, Ethnic Chinese, etc.
   Laos: Lao, Hmong, Mien (Yao), Ethnic Chinese, Khmu', Lue, etc.

2. Education

   No formal education
   Some formal education
   Extensive formal education

3. Literacy

   Non-literate
   Literate

4. English Language Proficiency

5. Goals, such as:

   Orientation information
   Survival/coping
   Initial employment
   Formal skills training
   Upgrading employment

B. PROGRAM GOALS

- A clear definition of program goals
- A logical system to meet the goals
- A reasonable time frame for meeting the goals

C. CAPACITY TO PERFORM PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Adequate and appropriate staff
- Adequate and appropriate student and teacher materials
- Adequate space

D. PROGRAM EVALUATION PROCEDURE

A periodic evaluation component should be part of each program design.

II. DELIVERY SETTING

The setting in which ESL instruction is given will vary in consideration of factors such as the number and geographic distribution of the clients, the needs of the clients, the type of ESL offered and the capacity of the service provider.

- The delivery/instructional settings discussed below all assume an instructor (that is, books, audiolingual tapes and other materials are supplemental).
- The delivery settings are not mutually exclusive. They can be combined and/or overlapped depending upon the needs of the clients and the ability of the service provider.
- Within a program, there should be coordination of the delivery settings.

A. NON-FORMAL SITUATION

- A non-formal situation such as tutoring or home instruction may be the most flexible type of instruction setting.
- In a non-formal tutoring system used in a wide geographic area, some central point of coordination should be built in to provide materials and coordination of program activities.

B. SINGLE MULTI-LEVEL CLASS

- In areas where there is, for example, an insufficient number of clients to form more than one class, a single multi-level class may be used.
- Whenever possible, however, clients should be grouped for ESL instruction according to needs and level of competency in English.

C. CENTER

- A center would provide many classes and different levels of instruction.
- A center setting is appropriate for areas with large numbers of clients in need of ESL.

D. ON-JOB SITE

This setting is appropriate for, but not restricted to, ESL offered in conjunction with employment or job training.

III. ESL INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS

Experience has shown that clients' goals will be better realized if the ESL program is carefully focused. The types of ESL approaches outlined on the following pages have been proven successful for refugee clients. Each outline can serve as a framework for an ESL program or be a component of a total program.

- These frameworks focus on ESL with specific goals.
- The different frameworks are not mutually exclusive. They are overlapping and can be supportive of each other.
- A framework may be separated into sub-areas selected to meet the needs of the clients.
- Terms used here are being given specific meaning though they may cover content that has been offered for some time under other names, such as "general ESL".

The different frameworks will be described through the following:

- Definition

- Clients to be served
  If the focus of a framework is particluarly appropriate for a certain type of client, this will be indicated.
- Delivery
- Intensity

  To be effective, most ESL programs should be offered a minimum of 6 hours per week.

  The frequency and duration of instruction will vary according to the instructional focus and the needs of the clients.
- Content

  The minimum subject area for each instructional focus will be indicated.
- Outcome
  The outcome indicates the minimum goals that ESL with each instructional focus should have.
- Special Considerations

  These are important since they will affect the effectiveness of a program.

A. ESL/SURVIVAL INSTRUCTION FOCUS

DEFINITION:

ESL/SURVIVAL provides the language necessary for minimum functioning in the specific community in which the refugee is settled.

CLIENTS TO BE SERVED:

ESL/SURVIVAL can be used with all clients.

DELIVERY:

Any of the delivery settings outlined (non-formal, single multi-level class, center, on job-site) may be used, but the system chosen should be suited to the number of clients to be served and their geographical distribution.

INTENSITY:

- Recommended 6 to 15 hours per week, no fewer than 3 days per week.
- Best offered on a 5 day per week basis with a maximum of 3 hours per day.

CONTENT:

ESL/SURVIVAL may include but not be limited to simple statements, questions and vocabulary concerning:

- Consumer/environmental skills, such as

  personal information
  money/credit
  housing
  health
  communications
  shopping (food/clothing, non-essentials)
  community resources
  insurance
  taxes
  emergency measures

- American systems, such as

  Social customs and manners
  Classroom procedures
  Adjusting to American life

OUTCOME:

Clients who complete ESL/SURVIVAL should be able to:

- Ask and answer questions related to daily living and other subjects familiar to the client.
- Understand simple statements and questions addressed to them within their limited language scope and be able to ask for clarification when necessary.
- Be understood by native speakers paying close attention after repetition and clarification, since errors in pronunciation and grammar will probably be frequent.
- Possess vocabulary adequate for daily living needs, but probably inadequate for complex situations or ideas.

- Read essential forms, numbers, labels, signs, and simple written survival information.
- Fill out essential forms and write name, address, phone number and make emergency requests.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- ESL/SURVIVAL is the most generally applicable of all frameworks.
- ESL/SURVIVAL overlaps all the other frameworks.
- The use of native language aides is highly recommended.

B. ESL/LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOCUS

DEFINITION:

ESL/LITERACY differs substantively from literacy programs for native speakers of English. In ESL/LITERACY the learner reads and writes initially only the carefully controlled patterns that have been practiced in listening and speaking.

CLIENTS TO BE SERVED:

Clients in need of literacy training can be grouped into three general categories:

- Non-literate: Clients who have NO reading and writing skills in any language.
- Semi-literate: Clients who have the equivalent of 3 to 4 years of formal education and/or possess minimal literacy skills in any language.
- Non-latin alphabetic: Clients who are literate in their own language (e.g. Khmer, Lao, Chinese, etc.) but need to learn the formation of the Latin alphabet and the sound-symbol relationships of English.

DELIVERY:

- Clients who are non-literate will need to spend more time (than semi-literate and non-latin alphabetic) with pre-reading skills.
- Semi-literate and non-latin alphabetic clients may enter other types of ESL.
- Depending on their literacy needs, students may (also) be in a special literacy class and/or receive intensive tutorial instruction.

INTENSITY:

Recommended 5 days per week, maximum 1 to 2 hours per day.

CONTENT:

ESL/LITERACY training involves the following:

- Pre-reading skills
- Basic vocabulary and grammar suited to the needs of the clients until control in listening and speaking is established
- Identification of symbols (letters and numbers)
- Associating the spoken forms with the written forms (e.g. a spoken sentence with the way it is written)
- Reading basic words and sentences
- Writing basic words and sentences

OUTCOME:

Clients who complete ESL/LITERACY should be able to:

- Recognize and match similarities and differences in letters and words.
- Arrange letters and words in appropriate sequence.
- Recognize the words and sentences already practiced in listening and speaking.
- Distinguish differences in sounds.
- Produce the sounds.

- Recognize the written form of the sounds.
- Produce the written form of the sounds.
- Show an understanding of word order.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Mastery of basic literacy concepts is necessary for progress in ESL/SURVIVAL, ESL/BASIC SKILLS, ESL/GENERAL VOCATIONAL, ESL/OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC, and ESL/HOME MANAGEMENT.
- The content material in ESL/LITERACY needs to be presented in sequence.
- The ideal for literacy training is a one-to-one tutorial situation.
- The use of native language aides to clarify basic concepts and skills may be an important part of ESL/LITERACY.

C. ESL/BASIC SKILLS INSTRUCTION FOCUS

DEFINITION:

ESL/BASIC SKILLS helps the client to develop the abilities needed to meet requirements for normal (as opposed to minimal) daily living in the United States. ESL/BASIC SKILLS is more comprehensive than ESL/SURVIVAL.

CLIENTS TO BE SERVED:

ESL/BASIC SKILLS can be used with all clients.

DELIVERY:

Any of the delivery settings outlined (non-formal, single multi-level class, center, on-job site) may be used, but the system chosen should be suited to the number of clients to be served and their geographical distribution.

INTENSITY:

The intensity will vary greatly depending upon the local situation and the present basic skills level of the clients to be served.

CONTENT:

ESL/BASIC SKILLS may include but not be limited to:

- Communication skills required in normal daily interaction in the United States, such as

  conversing with friends, coworkers, sales and service people, physician, teacher, etc.

  reading labels, prices, bus schedules, signs, directions, etc.

  making requests, expressing intent, giving and taking instruction

  writing letters, completing forms

- Mathematics skills required in normal daily interaction in the United States, such as

  addition, subtraction, multiplication, division

  using a ruler or yardstick, measuring cup, scale and other instruments of measure

  understanding distances, weight, prices, time-telling, and their relationships

- Being a "good citizen"

- Consumer/environmental skills for normal daily living in the United States, such as:

  personal information
  money/credit
  housing
  health
  communications
  transportation
  shopping (essentials, non-essentials)
  community resources
  insurance
  taxes
  emergency measures

- Becoming a United States citizen

- Skills needed to satisfy state/local requirements for education/employment, such as GED, etc.

OUTCOME:

Clients who complete ESL/BASIC SKILLS should be able to:

- In normal daily interaction,

  understand non-technical spoken and written English

  speak in non-technical English with acceptable pronunciation and grammar

  write non-technical English with acceptable spelling and grammar

  perform the four basic math functions and use fractions, decimal, percentage and measurements

  and/or

  satisfy state or local language and math functional requirements, such as grade level equivalency, GED, etc.

- Meet language requirements for driver's license if/when necessary.

- Meet requirements for citizenship if/when desired.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Where small numbers of clients are to be served, ESL/BASIC SKILLS may include survival and/or literacy through the outcomes listed above.

- Where larger numbers of clients are to be served, ESL/BASIC SKILLS can be used as the next higher level for those clients who have completed survival and/or literacy components.

- ESL/BASIC SKILLS is especially appropriate for clients whose education has been limited or interrupted.

D. ESL/GENERAL VOCATIONAL INSTRUCTION FOCUS

DEFINITION:

ESL/GENERAL VOCATIONAL provides the client with language and skills necessary for getting and keeping a job, an orientation to the American job market, expectations about work in the U.S., and the ability to deal with the application and interview process without extensive assistance, and with work-related interpersonal interactions.

CLIENTS TO BE SERVED:

ESL/GENERAL VOCATIONAL is for clients who wish and have the ability to get, keep or advance in a job.

DELIVERY:

Any of the delivery settings outlined (non-formal, single multi-level class, center, on-job site) may be used, but the system chosen should be suited to the number of clients to be served and their geographical distribution.

INTENSITY:

The intensity will vary according to the local situation and needs of the clients to be served.

CONTENT:

ESL/GENERAL VOCATIONAL may include but not be limited to:

- Language skills with an emphasis on

  pronunciation
  aural (listening) understanding
  American idioms
  informal language use

- Also an emphasis on other skills and information such as

  job finding/seeking
  interviewing
  filling out applications and forms
  career exploration
  employer expectations
  employee rights and responsibilities
  salaries and fringe benefits
  assessing marketable skills
  interpersonal relationships in a work setting
  giving and taking instructions
  cultural work norms
  test taking skills

OUTCOME:

Clients who complete ESL/GENERAL VOCATIONAL should be able to demonstrate the skills necessary to acquire and maintain employment and potentially advance on the job, such as the ability to:

complete forms
give and take instruction
interpret a pay check stub

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- ESL/GENERAL VOCATIONAL is particulary applicable to evening programs.
- A successful outcome may include placement in a vocational training program.
- ESL/GENERAL VOCATIONAL is appropriate for clients who want to work but who do not want to go into skills training.
- The materials used should reflect the emphasis placed on idioms and the language and customs of the workplace.
- The use of native language aides may be very helpful in explaining American customs and practices in terms the clients can understand, especially clients with low level language skills.

E. ESL/OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC INSTRUCTION FOCUS

DEFINITION:

ESL/OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC provides the specific English necessary for success in training and/or on the job in a particular occupation. ESL/OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC differs from ESL/GENERAL VOCATIONAL in that clients are prepared for a specific occupation, such as electronics assembly, auto mechanic, food services, clerical, dental hygienist, etc.

CLIENTS TO BE SERVED:

- Clients who want vocational training programs.
- Clients on the job who need English skills relevant to that job.

DELIVERY:

- One-to-one teaching or tutoring situations.
- ESL Center or combinations of ESL and vocational training programs/technical education centers.
- Work sites employing numbers of refugees.

INTENSITY:

The intensity will vary depending upon the type of vocational training or job requirements.

CONTENT:

ESL/OCCUPATION SPECIFIC may include but not be limited to:

- Specific understanding, speaking, reading and writing skills needed to succeed in a particular job. Areas typically covered are:

  safety language
  asking and answering work-related questions
  explaining problems with work or machinery
  reporting on work done
  understanding and giving instructions
  making requests
  informal conversation on the job
  occupation specific vocabulary

OUTCOME:

Clients who complete ESL/OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC should be able to communicate on the job in the specified occupation.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- ESL/OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC works best when offered in conjunction with occupational training or employment.
- Institutions should be ready to adapt vocational instruction to limited English speakers.
- Because there is a general lack of occupations-specific ESL materials, institutions should be prepared to do extensive analyses of the language used in each occupation.
- ESL/OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC requires extensive coordination and contact between vocational instructors, ESL instructors, job counselors and employers.

F. ESL/HOME MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTION FOCUS

DEFINITION:

ESL/HOME MANAGEMENT provides English as related to the skills of running a household, caring for families, and living safely in a technological environment.

CLIENTS TO BE SERVED:

- Women

  with infants and small children for whom day care is not a feasible option

  with special learning problems due to handicap, non-literacy or lack of formal educational experiences

  who are unable to utilize public transportation

- Homebound elderly

DELIVERY:

Either a home or a formal/non-formal class setting.

INTENSITY:

Recommended 6 to 15 hours per week, at least twice a week.

CONTENT:

ESL/HOME MANAGEMENT may include but not be limited to:

- Home management skills, such as

  cooking
  cleaning and home maintenance
  use of energy
  shopping for food and clothing
  nutrition
  safety (including appliance use)
  emergency needs
  money management
  family health care
  parenting
  transportation
  telephoning
  awareness of social services
  effective use of time
  American social customs, manners and practices

OUTCOME:

Clients who complete ESL/HOME MANAGEMENT should be able to

- Satisfy routine daily living needs related to household management and minimum courtesy requirements.
- Ask or answer questions on topics relating to daily family living and other familiar subjects.
- Understand simple statements and questions, ask simple questions and ask for clarification when necessary, within their limited language scope.
- Possess vocabulary adequate for homemaking and family care needs, but probably inadequate for complex situations or ideas.
- Be understood by native speakers paying close attention after repetition and clarification, since errors in pronunciation and grammar will probably be frequent.
- Read essential forms, numbers, labels, signs.
- Fill out forms and written survival information.
- Write name, address, phone number and make emergency requests.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- ESL/HOME MANAGEMENT ideally will include both instruction in English and cultural presentations in the native language(s). Field trips into the community will be useful.
- The use of native language aides will contribute to the success of this type of program.
- Special transportation to and from class may have to be provided for some clients.
- Provisions may be needed at the learning site for infants and small (pre school) children of clients. Personnel involved with the care of children should include members of the clients' ethnic groups, if possible.
- It is necessary to be especially sensitive to the adjustment considerations of the elderly client.
- Literacy training may be necessary.